NPS Form 10-900

VLR- 6/19/96 United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor or computer, to complete all items

1. Name of Property		
historic name Liberty Baptist Chu	ırch	
other names/site number VDHR Site No. 16-6	59	
2. Location (
	mi. NE. of Liberty, Ft. A. P. Hill	N/A not for publication
city or town Bowling Green	• ,	vicinity
state Virginia code VA county	Caroline code 033 zip code	22427
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
As the designated authority under the National His	storic Preservation Act of 1986, as amen	ded, I hereby certify that
this X nomination request for determination	n of eligibility meets the documentation	standards for registering
properties in the National Register of Historic Place	·	
in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property		
recommend that this property be considered sign	nificant nationally statewide _	X locally. (See
continuation sheet for additional comments.)		
Signature of certifying official/Title	Date	
Signature of certifying official/ fine	Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau		
In any opinion the grandents. V mosts door w	not most the National Deviator suitarie	Coo continuation along
In my opinion, the property X meets does not for additional comments.)	not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet
All The Oh The The The	NA 1 41 - 1704 4 1991	
MCTITE Signature of commenting or other official/Title	Date	
Virginia Department of Historic Restate or Federal agency and bureau	3041 CC3	
4 2 4 5 1 5 1 6 1 6 2 6 6 7		
4. National Park Service Certification I hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
r hereby certify that this property is.	Signature of the Reeper	Date of Action
entered in the National Register.		
See continuation sheet.		
determined eligible for the National Register.		
See continuation sheet.		
determined not eligible for the National Regis	ster	
removed from the National Register.		
other (explain):		

Liberty Baptist Church Name of Property				Caroline Co., V.
5. Classification			<u> </u>	
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Res		n Property
private public-local public-State _X public-Federal	X building(s) district site structure object			buildings
Name of related multiple		Number of cont in the National	tributing reso	ources previously listed
N/A		<u>0</u>		
6. Function or Use	·			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Function		
Category	Subcategory	Category	S	uhcategory
RELIGION	religious facility	RELIGION	re	eligious facility
LANDSCAPE	natural feature	LANDSCAPE	n	atural feature
7. Description				
Architectural Classification	on	Materials (Enter categories from instructions	s)	
Greek Revival			RICK RICK	

roof

other

METAL

GLASS

Caroline Co., Va.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Liberty Baptist Church Name of Property	<u>Caroline Co., V:</u>
8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark *x* in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.) A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) Property is: X
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) ARCHITECTURE	Period of Significance 1850
	Significant Dates 1850
Significant Person (Complete of Criterion B is marked above) N/A	Cultural Affiliation N/A
	Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets, i

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National
Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
<u> </u>
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
#

Primary location of additional data:

X	State Historic Preservation Office
	Other State agency
	Federal agency
	Local government
	University
	Other
Nan	ne of repository:

Liberty Baptist Church

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

approximately 9.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

Zone Easting Northing 3 17 294300 4224400

1 17 294600 4224650 2 17 294600 4224400

4 17 294300 4224650

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title

J. Daniel Pezzoni

organization

J. Daniel Pezzoni, Preservation Consultant

date

August 9, 1995

street & number

PO Box 7825

telephone

(540) 366-0787

city or town

Roanoke

state <u>VA</u>

zip code

24019-0825

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name <u>United States of America contact: Commander, Fort A. P. Hill</u> street & number <u>Attn: ANAP-CD</u> telephone (804) 633-8366 city or town <u>Bowling Green</u> state <u>VA</u> zip code <u>22427-5000</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0, Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Liberty Baptist Church is a two-story brick building constructed in 1850 approximately six miles north of the town of Bowling Green, Caroline County, Virginia, in an area now part of the Fort A. P. Hill army installation. The south-facing nave-plan church measures 40' by 50' and has dual entries on the front gable end, three two-story windows on each side, later round-arched stained-glass windows, and modern metal roofing. Inside, the Greek Revival sanctuary features a gallery supported by classical columns, and a reredos behind the altar consists of flat pilasters supporting a simple entablature. Behind the church are a historic spring and a modern privy. The church is reached by a short approach drive that parallels Travis Lake Road on its north side, and it stands in a park-like setting surrounded by woods. The western tip of Travis Lake, the dominant feature of a proposed National Register district, is located slightly over half a mile to the east.

Inventory

- 1. Liberty Baptist Church. 1850. Contributing building.
- 2. Spring. Probably in use by the 1790s. Contributing site.
- 3. Privy. Second half 20th c. Noncontributing building.

Church Exterior

The church is constructed of five-course American-bond brickwork with closer bricks at the corners and pencilled mortar joints. At the top of the side walls runs a wood cornice with cyma recta and cyma reversa bed moldings, cornice returns on the front gable, and shaped stop boards on the rear gable. The front elevation features two entries, each with carefully shaped stone thresholds and steps and three-panel double-leaf doors that form a six-panel arrangement when closed. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century names and dates are written in pencil on the mortar joints to each side of the entries. Over the doors are eight-over-eight-sash windows and, in the peak of the gable, a round-arched opening enclosed with a board giving the name and date of the church and painted with a yin-yang emblem symbolic of the Twenty-Ninth Infantry Division. The three-bay side elevations feature two-story window openings with twelve-over-twelve-sash windows below and eight-over-eight-sash windows above separated by paneled spandrels. The lower sashes of the rear side windows have been replaced with stained glass memorial windows (see interior description). Two doorways on the rear elevation mirror the front elevation arrangement; between them is a large stained glass altar window (see interior description).

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Description (continued)

Door and window surrounds are molded. Brick flues rise at the eaves of the roof, which was resheathed in metal in the early 1990s.

Church Interior

The interior features modern wood flooring, plastered walls with a modern wood-paneled wainscot, and a sheetrock ceiling with a molded cornice replacing an earlier plaster-and-lath ceiling that was damaged in the early 1990s. With the exception of the gallery pews, the sanctuary and altar furnishings are modern. A gallery originally intended for use by black members of the congregation extends along the three non-altar sides of the sanctuary. The gallery is supported by classical wood columns (Doric in inspiration) with molded capitals and has a sloping bleacher floor and a paneled railing. Simple plank pews and several more elaborate Gothic pews stand in the gallery (the former appear to be original to the church). A dog-leg stair with rectangular-section newels and balusters rises to the gallery in the southeast corner. Enclosed winder stairs in the north corners of the sanctuary formerly rose to the gallery but have since been floored over.

The focal point of the sanctuary is the altar, backed by a Greek Revival pilastered reredos that frames an arched stained-glass window with marbled green quarrel panes, an amber border, and a pink fleur-de-lis at its center. The window openings to either side of the altar contain memorial stained-glass windows. The richly colored window on the west side is dedicated to John and Elizabeth B. Holloway, and the more pastel window on the east side is dedicated to the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment ("Brave Rifles") and dated 1951. Other sanctuary features include paneled entry embrasures, beaded board spandrels between the first- and second-story window sashes, and rounded stove flues rising on the side walls. The roof structure, visible through a hatch above the south end of the sanctuary, consists of mortise-and-tenoned trusses with principal rafters that support purlins and common rafters.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

Leading up to the church from the approach drive is a Y-shaped concrete walkway dating to the early twentieth century. Off the east side of the church are two poured concrete footers associated with an unidentified former addition or separate structure. A cemetery with a wire fence formerly extended behind (to the north of) the church, the only present above-ground evidence of which is a carpet of periwinkle. A road trace leads north and downhill approximately one-hundred yards to a spring. The spring is lined with stones (apparently a

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Description (continued)

modern addition) and flows into a branch known variously in old documents as "the meeting house spring branch" or "Liberty Branch." About fifty yards to the northwest of the church stand's a modern two-compartment privy with a standard A. P. Hill latrine form, a shed roof, and corrugated metal siding. The area around the church has a park-like ambience shaded by mature oaks, tulip poplars, and cedars. Surrounding this relatively open area is deciduous forest.

Integrity Statement

Liberty Baptist Church retains good historic integrity. Since its acquisition by the army, repairs and maintenance have respected the historic fabric of the building; for example, a 1993 reroofing of the building replaced in kind the metal sheathing that had covered the building from at least the early twentieth century, and a new ceiling installed in the sanctuary matched the appearance of the original ceiling. A spring that served as a water source during services still flows in a picturesque wooded setting north of the church. One associated historic resource that has been adversely affected is the church cemetery. Marked graves in this cemetery were moved to another location when the A. P. Hill Military Reservation was established in the early 1940s. Unmarked graves presumably still lie underground near the church.

Architectural Analysis

The first Liberty Baptist Church was a frame meeting house constructed at or near the present site in 1796. Church members James Pittman and William Taliaferro contracted with Absalom Bradley to construct a 20' by 32' building with a "shed" and two galleries. This building served until 1850 when the present brick church was completed. Like the original building, the brick church featured galleries that were intended for use by black members.

The 1850 building was typical of churches built throughout Virginia during the antebellum period, as demonstrated by such standard features as its gable-fronted nave form and dual front entries. Liberty Church shared even closer similarities with other Baptist churches built in the Fort A. P. Hill area during the mid-nineteenth century. These generally featured windows positioned directly above the dual entries and an arched opening--either a window, vent, or signage panel--in the peak of the front gable.² Of this group, Liberty Church is the only one to survive, since the others were torn down after they were acquired by the military.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Description (continued)

Endnotes

- 1. Wright, "Brief History;" Fall, "Liberty Church."
- 2. Works Progress Administration survey files; PMA and Traceries, "Historic Architectural Survey of Caroline County," 95-108.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Liberty Baptist Church is associated with one of the oldest Baptist meetings in Caroline County, Virginia. The earliest reference to the church dates to 1796, with more formal organization following in the 1810s. The present church, a brick nave-plan building built in 1850, is a well-preserved example of the churches built in the county during the antebellum period. The interior features Greek Revival detail and a slave gallery. From the Second World War to the present, the building has served as the Post Chapel for Fort A. P. Hill, and it is the only pre-1941 religious building to survive on the base.

Justification of Criteria

Liberty Baptist Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the area of architecture as one of Caroline County's best preserved antebellum churches, and as the sole survivor of a number of churches that stood on the site of Fort A. P. Hill before 1941. The church exhibits characteristics of form and detail that were typical of the county's now depleted stock of early churches, such as its gable-front elevation with windows and an arched gable opening positioned over dual entries. The period of significance for the church corresponds to its year of construction, 1850. The church is eligible at the local level of significance.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Terry Banks and Evelyn Peyton served as contacts for the Fort A. P. Hill Environmental Office. Len Winter served as the contact for Gray & Pape, Inc. Frederick J. Anderson, Executive Director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, provided historical information. Specialist Ralph Cooper, assistant to the Post Chaplain, provided information on the present use of Liberty Baptist Church.

Historical Background

During the colonial period, the Church of England was the only officially recognized church in Caroline County, as in other Virginia counties, but beginning in the early eighteenth century, Quakers, Presbyterians, and other religious dissenters began to settle and worship in the area. Baptists were present in the 1740s; by the Revolution they apparently constituted the largest dissenting group in the county. Early Baptist congregations included Carmel and Reed's (Mount Horeb), both organized in 1773, and Salem, organized in 1788. Liberty Baptist Church was in existence by 1796, the year church members James Pittman and William Taliaferro contracted

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

with Absalom Bradley to build a frame meeting house at or near the site of the present church. Pittman and Taliaferro had both been jailed during the 1770s for sanctioning "preaching in their home|s|;" the name selected for their church--Liberty--probably refers to the religious freedom experienced by the two men after the Revolution. Not much is known about Liberty Church until the 1810s, when Hipkins Pittman is recorded as the congregation's first known pastor. According to early church minutes, the majority of members were black, primarily the slaves of white masters who attended the church. During the 1830s and 1840s, a total of 193 whites and 396 blacks were enumerated on church membership lists.²

In the late 1840s, a controversy arose in the congregation over the temperance issue, and a large portion of the membership--including the pastor, the Rev. Lawrence Battaile--left Liberty to form Bethesda Church, located several miles to the north. Bethesda constructed a brick church in 1847-48, and in 1850, apparently in response, the remnants of the Liberty congregation completed a brick church to replace the frame meeting house. (Unfortunately, church records for the period do not preserve information concerning the construction of the brick church.)³ The new church seated 300 members on the main floor and 150 in the gallery, which was used by black members, and the congregation supported white and black Sunday schools. In 1868, after the Civil War, many black members left the congregation to found other churches, although the option to retain membership at Liberty was offered. The congregation continued to support schooling for local blacks after the war.⁴

Through the years, the congregation maintained a strict moral code. For example, in 1868 the church resolved to expel any member found guilty of dancing, and non-attendance, intemperance, dishonesty, and attending balls, barbecues, and the theater also triggered disciplinary action. Services were held at Liberty Church on a monthly basis until the 1930s, when a bimonthly schedule was instituted. In 1939-40, the Rev. J. R. Noffsinger undertook a renovation of the church and grounds, installing electric lights and placing markers over all known graves in the cemetery.

Less than a year after this work was completed, the congregation learned that the military would take its church and other properties in northeast Caroline County to create the A. P. Hill Military Reservation. The last service, an all-day program, was held on June 1, 1941. Traditionally, dinner was prepared and served on the grounds, but at this service members and guests were asked to bring picnic lunches since so many were in the process of moving from their farms. Church membership at the time numbered approximately 150 members. With the dissolution of the church, members from Liberty and other Baptist churches in the area joined congregations

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

located outside the military reservation. Marked graves from the site were moved to a cemetery located at Broaddus Pond near Bowling Green.⁶

Most preexisting buildings acquired by the military were torn down or allowed to deteriorate, but Liberty Church was pressed into service as the Post Chapel in 1942. During World War II and after, the Post Chaplain held services in the church. In recent years services have been conducted during the summer only. Other groups have used the chapel for religious worship, including the Virginia Military Academy (which maintains offices at nearby Heth camp) and former members of Liberty Baptist Church, who held annual homecoming services through the 1960s.⁷

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Endnotes

- 1. PMA and Traceries, "Historic Architectural Survey of Caroline County, Virginia," 95-106.
- 2. Caroline Progress, May 22 and 29, 1941; Wright, "Brief History."
- 3. Frederick J. Anderson, personal communication.
- 4. Caroline Progress, May 22 and 29, 1941.
- 5. Ibid.
- 6. Evans, "History of Fort A. P. Hill," 14.
- 7. Interview with Ralph Cooper, assistant to the Fort A. P. Hill Post Chaplain, August 3, 1995; Fall, "Liberty Church."

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

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- Winter, Len and J. Daniel Pezzoni. "A Phase I Cultural Resource Inventory of Fort A.P. Hill, Caroline County, Virginia." Richmond, Va.: Gray & Pape, Inc., 1994.
- Works Progress Administration. "Liberty Baptist Church." Survey form, 1937.
- Wright, Mrs. John, comp. "A Brief History of Liberty, Bethesda, Upper Zion & Zoar Baptist Church." n. d.

NPS Form 10-900-a

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

OPEN APPROVED TO: 104-T-0019

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Liberty Baptist Church nominated parcel are portrayed on the 1:200 scale map that appears as Exhibit A.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Liberty Baptist Church nominated parcel include the contributing church and spring, a noncontributing privy, and the church's park-like setting. The boundaries also include the site of a former cemetery located behind (north of) the church. Marked graves from this cemetery were moved after the establishment of the Fort A. P. Hill Military Reservation in 1941, but unmarked graves are likely to remain in the area.

(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Page 11

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of: Liberty Baptist Church, VDHR # 16-69

1. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va. VIEW OF: West and south (front) elevations; view facing north.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 1 of 6

2. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va. VIEW OF: South (front) and east elevations; view facing north.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 2 of 6

3. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va. VIEW OF: North and west elevations; view facing southeast.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 3 of 6

4. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

VIEW OF: Sanctuary with reredos and gallery.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 4 of 6

NPS Form 10-900-1 (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Page 12

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

Photographs (continued)

5. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

' NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

VIEW OF: Sanctuary with gallery.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 5 of 6

6. CREDIT: J. Daniel Pezzoni

DATE: 1995

NEGATIVE FILED: Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

VIEW OF: Spring.

NEG. NO.: VDHR # 14164 FILE NO.: VDHR # 16-69

PHOTO 6 of 6

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 13

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

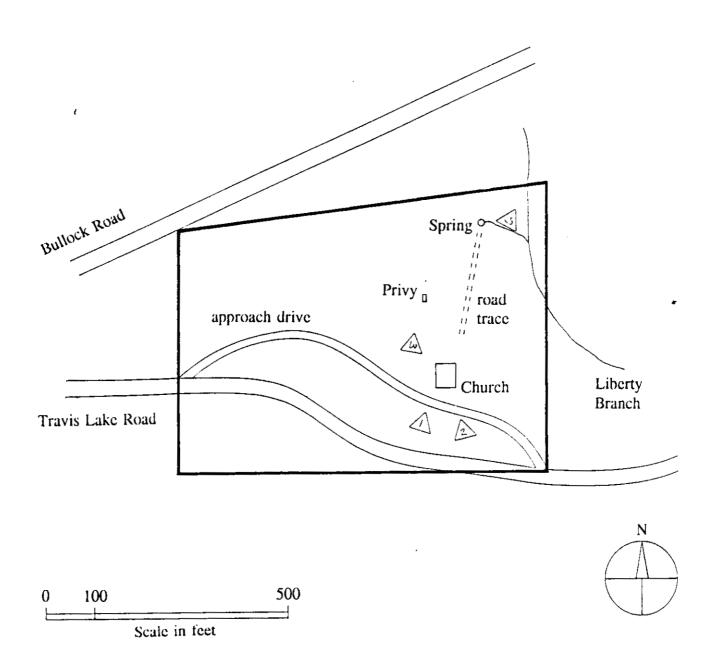


Exhibit A. Liberty Baptist Church nominated parcel. Angle and number of photographs indicated by triangles.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Exhibit Page 14

Liberty Baptist Church Caroline Co., Va.

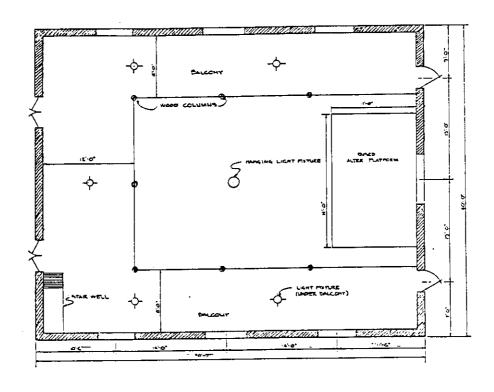




Exhibit B. Liberty Baptist Church floor plan. Based on "Liberty Chapel, Bldg. #250," Drawing No. 65-28, from Fort A. P. Hill buildings and grounds records. Scale: 1" = 12'-6".

